

**Western Coventry Fire District
110 Victory Highway
Greene, RI 02827
(401) 397-7520**

June 23, 2010

WCFD Board of Directors Emergency Meeting held at 805 Maple Valley Road, Coventry, RI.

Item 1 on Agenda:

**Meeting was called to order at 9:27 a.m. by Chairperson Earl Mann.
The meeting was held at**

Item 2 on Agenda:

Present:

Earl Mann, John Humble, Richard Holt, Kent Novak (arrived at 9:34 a.m.)

Absent:

Robert Hevey

Also present:

J. William W. Harsch, WCFD Counsel

Item 3 on Agenda:

Chairman Mann commented that the emergency meeting was necessary to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the public pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-6(c) and to discuss the breakdown of communication and resulting issues as to the public health and safety of the residents of the District.

Mr. Humble made a motion to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the public pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-6(c). Mr. Holt seconded the motion. Chairman Mann asked for a vote and the motion was passed unanimously by Mr. Mann, Mr. Humble and Mr. Holt.

Item 4 on Agenda:

Chairman Mann asked for discussion as to the breakdown of communication. Counsel was asked to clarify the breakdown of communications and what led up to it.

Attorney Harsch stated that there had been several discussions with members of the Board about a deteriorating situation within the Department and increasing difficulty between the Board and leadership of the Department by the present Chief. He reported that the Chief had now taken legal action against the District which, especially in regard to an organization that is responsible for health and safety of the community it serves, is an untenable situation. The

Chief as the line officer of the District and the Board's point of contact with the working members of the Department must maintain workable communication with members of the Board. The Western Coventry Fire District is responsible by Statute for the wellbeing of the community and the citizens of the community in the areas of health and safety. Unless the Board feels that they can work with the Chief, and given that the Chief has advised that he is filing a complaint against the Board with the Human Rights Commission, it appears unavoidable for the Board to urgently address the situation.

The Board members present indicated that they were satisfied with the explanation of counsel.

Kent Novak arrived at the meeting at 9:34 a.m. He advised that he was at the Summit Station at 9 a.m. to attend the meeting, indicating that he was not aware of the location of the meeting being elsewhere. Mr. Novak asked if the meeting was being recorded to which the response was, yes. Mr. Novak asked for a brief review of agenda items 3 and 4. Chairman Mann explained the vote that had been taken on item 3, said that the discussion was completed on item 4, and went forward with item 5.

Item 5 on Agenda:

Chairman Mann asked for a motion on sending a notice letter to the Chief as presented to the Board. Mr. Humble made the motion to send the notice letter to current Chief Pomfret placing him on

immediate suspension as Chief with pay. The motion was seconded by Mr. Holt. Chairman Mann asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Novak expressed his contempt of the letter and stated that it is unnecessary, unneeded and places the District at risk of great financial liability. There being no further discussion, Chairman Mann took the vote. Mr. Mann, Mr. Humble and Mr. Holt voted in the affirmative and Mr. Novak voted against the motion.

Item 6 on Agenda:

Chairman Mann entertained a motion to appoint Russell Lacallaide as Interim Chief. Mr. Novak interrupted with his displeasure at this proposed appointment and was called out of order. Mr. Novak apologized. Mr. Holt made a motion to appoint Russell Lacallaide as Interim Chief. Mr. Humble seconded the motion. Chairman Mann asked for further discussion. Mr. Novak asked what Mr. Lacallaide's qualifications were. Chairman Mann stated that Mr. Lacallaide understands the Department, he was part of it at one time as prior Deputy Chief of the Department, he is working as a rescue person and has training abilities that might help the District to reorganize the Department. Attorney Harsch stated that the Board cannot discuss Mr. Lacallaide's qualifications without providing notice to the individual and having him present at the meeting. Mr. Novak stated that he would not comment on Mr. Lacallaide's performance. Chairman Mann took the vote. Mr. Mann, Mr. Humble and Mr. Holt voted in the affirmative and Mr. Novak voted against the motion.

Item 7 on Agenda

Chairman Mann entertained a motion to postpone the June 24 Board of Directors meeting and to send a further letter to Chief Pomfret advising him that the Board intended to discuss his job performance as Chief and setting forth in advance the matters of concern to the Board to be discussed as to the personnel evaluation agenda item. A motion was made by Mr. Holt to postpone the June 24 Board of Directors meeting and to send a letter to Chief Pomfret setting forth in advance matters to be discussed as to the personnel evaluation agenda item. Mr. Novak asked who is sending the letter and questioned whether the Chief would have adequate time to respond before the hearing. Attorney Harsch indicated that the Chief or his legal representative, if he had one, could always ask for a postponement of the meeting if he felt that he needed more time to prepare. The notice of suspension letter is to be hand-delivered today. Mr. Novak also asked that a copy of the letter be provided to the Board members without the necessity of having another meeting. Chairman Mann took the vote. Mr. Mann, Mr. Humble and Mr. Holt voted in the affirmative and Mr. Novak abstained.

Chairman Mann stated that he would like to assign Mr. Humble and Mr. Holt to hand-deliver the notice letter to the Chief in person as to his immediate suspension as Chief and also to consult with the Interim Chief, including arrangements as to continuing to meet the public service requirements and responsibilities of the District.

Adjournment:

Chairman Mann entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Novak asked about having an open forum. Chairman Mann stated that there was no open forum on the agenda for this meeting.

Mr. Humble motioned to adjourn. Mr. Holt seconded. Mr. Humble, Mr. Holt and Mr. Mann voted in favor. Mr. Novak abstained.